



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CITY OF HARTFORD AND CONNECTICUT SCIENCE CENTER
ANNOUNCE GRANTS FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

***"Hartford Innovation Challenge" to promote entrepreneurs in all fields of
Technology, Science & Invention
Deadline to Submit Intent to Apply: August 8, 2011***

HARTFORD (July 5, 2011) -- Hartford-based entrepreneurs and small business owners are urged to apply now for \$30,000 in grant funding through the new **Hartford Innovation Challenge**. These Business Development Grants are designed to help entrepreneurs move forward with projects in the areas of applied science, technology, and innovation. The 2011 awards program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by the Connecticut Science Center. The awards will be given to three entrepreneurs innovating in the city of Hartford, which must be the location of their residence or business.

The grant program is the result of a partnership between the City and the Connecticut Science Center to stimulate and recognize innovation as a present and future economic driver for the city. Throughout Hartford's history entrepreneurs – Samuel Colt, Colonial Albert Pope, William Mason, Horace Wells, Christopher Spencer and Elisha Root - have been critical to its economic vibrancy and vitality.

The program also complements the City's support for job creation in the arts through a nationally-recognized grants program administered by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. "Hartford's creative economy depends on the City's persistent commitment to small businesses and innovators in science and technology as well as the arts," said Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra. "This new initiative with the Connecticut Science Center gives us another tool to encourage and celebrate innovative and groundbreaking new ideas in science and technology. Creativity and innovation are proud parts of our city's past and will be crucial in better defining the future of Connecticut's Capital City."

The partnership also leverages a robust program at the new Science Center that has already served more than 10,000 Hartford school children through structured field trips at no charge, and strengthened the capabilities of dozens of the city's professional educators and science teachers since opening in 2009. "The Connecticut Science Center is pleased to work with the City of Hartford to celebrate and nurture the work of innovators in our midst," said Matt Fleury, President and CEO. "This awards program reinforces a number of significant efforts to promote Hartford as an incubator for entrepreneurial activity and innovation."

This partnership has strong support from the State. "The basic structure of the Connecticut economy is that we are concentrated in very large, mature firms, and are short on young, fast growing companies. These innovation grants are a very positive effort by the City of Hartford to grow its entrepreneurial sector," said Christopher "Kip" Bergstrom, Executive Director of Commission on Culture and Tourism.

Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The program is open to residents and innovations developed in the city of Hartford. The City and the Science Center will host Public Information Meetings on July 12 and July 20 at the Science Center on 250 Columbus Blvd. Guidelines, applications, and deadlines are posted online: www.ctsciencecenter.org/innovation. Intent to Apply forms are due by August 8; applications are due by September 26. Award notification will be made in early November.

For questions or additional information, please contact Lionel Rigler, Acting Senior Project Manager at RIGLL001@hartford.gov or 860-757-9277.

###

About the Connecticut Science Center The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Visitors experience over 150 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events and lectures for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. More information: www.CTScienceCenter.org or 860.SCIENCE.

Media Contacts:

Tracy Shirer (tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org)
860.520.2116
Director of Marketing and Public Relations
Connecticut Science Center

Sarah Barr (barrs001@hartford.gov)
(860) 757-9731
Director, Office of Communications and New Media
City of Hartford